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Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN NEW YORK 03529

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: MARK CHONA MEETS WITH CONTACT GROUP
SEPTEMBER 8

1. ZAMBIAN PRESIDENTIAL ADVISER MARK CHONA MET WITH THE CONTACT GROUP AT HIS REQUEST ON SEPTEMBER 8 TO DISCUSS RHODESIA. CHONA SAID THAT WHILE PRESIDENT KAUNDA HAD CORRESPONDED BILATERALLY WITH SEVERAL OF THE FIVE ON RHODESIA, HE HAD NOW SPECIFICALLY INSTRUCTED CHONA TO MEET WITH THE FIVE, AS THE FIVE, ON THIS SUBJECT. KAUNDA'S BASIC MESSAGE TO THE FIVE WAS THAT IF THE SITUATION IN RHODESIA GETS WORSE, AS IT SHOWS EVERY SIGN
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OF DOING, IT INEVITABLY WILL BECOME THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FIVE JUST AS NAMIBIA HAS. CHONA BRIEFLY WENT OVER THE HISTORY OF PRESIDENT KAUNDA'S OWN EFFORTS TO SEEK PEACE IN RHODESIA, EMPHASIZING KAUNDA'S DEEP COMMITMENT TO PEACE AND HIS ACTIONS SINCE 1974 TO FIND A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION. DESPITE THE FAILURE TO DATE OF ALL ATTEMPTS AT A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM

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PRESIDENT KAUNDA HAS CONTINUED TO HOPE THAT PROGRESS CAN BE MADE. THAT WAS THE REASON, CHONA REMARKED, THAT KAUNDA TOOK THE RISKS HE TOOK IN MEETING WITH IAN SMITH LAST YEAR. NOW, SAID CHONA, THE SITUATION IS EVEN MORE DANGEROUS BECAUSE OF THE SHOOTING DOWN OF THE RHODESIAN VISCOUNT AIRCRAFT. ON THIS SUBJECT, KAUNDA WISHED TO SAY: (1) HE VERY MUCH REGRETS THE LOSS OF LIFE, (2) THE MISSILE WHICH DOWNED THE AIRPLANE WAS NOT FIRED FROM ZAMBIA OR BY ZAMBIANS, (3) HE WISHED TO REMIND THE FIVE THAT MANY MORE ZIMBABWEANS HAVE BEEN MASSACRED BY SMITH'S TROOPS WITHOUT STIRRING AS MUCH WESTERN REACTION AS HAS THE VISCOUNT INCIDENT, AND (4) THE SMITH REGIME HAS THREATENED REVENGE. KAUNDA DOES NOT FEAR, SAID CHONA, THE MILITARY CONSEQUENCES TO ZAMBIA OF RETALIATION BY SMITH. WHAT HE FEARS IS THE BROADER CONSEQUENCES FOR "ALL OF US, INCLUDING THE UNITED NATIONS" IF SMITH SHOULD RETALIATE. IF SMITH SHOULD AGAIN ATTACK ZAMBIA, CHONA SAID, KAUNDA COULD BE FORCED TO TAKE ACTION "PREJUDICIAL" TO CURRENT NEGOTIATING EFFORTS, ALTHOUGH HE WISHED TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO AVOID COMPLICATING THE SITUATION. BUT THERE WOULD BE A GREAT TEMPTATION SHOULD ZAMBIA AGAIN BE ATTACKED TO "SEEK ASSISTANCE FROM OTHERS". THE HEAT-SEEKING MISSILE WHICH DOWNED THE VISCOUNT, CHONA SAID POINTEDLY, WAS ALMOST SURELY NOT THE ONLY ONE IN THE HANDS OF THOSE OPPOSING SMITH.
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2. CHONA REMARKED THAT THE MARCH 3RD AGREEMENT SIGNED IN SALISBURY WAS DESIGNED TO "BUY ALL OF 1978" FOR SMITH. SMITH HAS NOW POSTPONED ELECTIONS UNTIL 1979. KAUNDA WAS AFRAID THAT SMITH WAS "NOW TRYING TO BUY 1979" AS WELL. BUT IF SMITH INSISTS ON HIS PRESENT COURSE, CHONA EMPHASIZED, THEN THE VIOLENCE IS CERTAIN TO ESCALATE WITH DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES. PRESIDENT KAUNDA WANTED THE FIVE TO BE AWARE OF HIS VIEWS. AMBASSADOR YOUNG COMMENTED THAT SMITH NOW SEEMED BENT ON TRYING TO INTERNATIONALIZE THE SITUATION. CHONA AGREED AND SAID, "YES, AND WE WANT YOU TO HELP STOP HIM". HE DID NOT OFFER ANY SPECIFICS.

3. THE REPRESENTATIVES OF CANADA, FRANCE AND THE FRG ALL TOLD CHONA THAT THEY WOULD IMMEDIATELY REPORT HIS DEMARCHE TO THEIR GOVERNMENTS AND WOULD REPORT BACK TO ZAMBIAN AUTHORITIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. YOUNG

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